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5750 Ser 01/010 22 Jan 98

- Commanding Officer, USS GRAPPLE (ARS 53) From: To: Director of Naval History, Naval Historical Center, (Attn: N09BH) Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC 20374-5060
- Subj: COMMAND HISTORY
- Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F
- (1) Command Composition and Organization(2) Ship's Schedule Encl:

  - (3) Narrative
- Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (3) are submitted. 1.

D. E. DAVIS

## Command Composition and Organization

Commanding Officer: David E. Davis, LCDR, USN

<u>ISIC</u>: Commander, Combat Logistics Squadron Two

MISSION: GRAPPLES's mission is to provide rescue and salvage service to the fleet. Her capabilities include:

TOWING: GRAPPLE is capable of rescue and open ocean towing. The ship can develop a bollard pull of 120,000 pounds and has an installed double drum towing machine with 3,000 feet of 2 ¼ inch wire rope on each drum.

SALVAGE: GRAPPLE carries transportable cutting and welding equipment, hydraulic and electric power sources, dewatering equipment and hull repair materials to effect temporary hull repairs on stranded or otherwise damaged ships. GRAPPLE also has a five-ton boom forward and a 40-ton boom aft to off-load a disabled ship and handle heavy equipment during salvage operations.

BEACH GEAR: A stranded vessel may be extracted from the beach using six sets of beach gear carried by GRAPPLE. Two beach gear ground legs can be rigged on GRAPPLE and four beach gear ground legs can be rigged on the stranded vessel.

OFF SHIP FIRE FIGHTING: There are three fire monitors mounted on board GRAPPLE. These fire monitors are supplied with up to 1,000 gallons of seawater or Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) to fight fires on other ships.

HEAVY LIFT: The main bow rollers and stern rollers, if used simultaneously, can create a dynamic lift of 300 tons.

<u>DIVING</u>: The MK21 air diving system on board GRAPPLE provides divers with the capability of tethered dives to 190 feet of seawater. GRAPPLE has a recompression chamber for treatment of decompression sickness or for routine surface decompression.

Encl (1)

## SHIP'S SCHEDULE

18 DEC-04 JAN	CHRISTMAS STANDDOWN
08 JAN	ENTERED PLANNED MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
02 FEB-06 FEB	
09 MAR-13 MAR	PLOT III
19 MAR-20 MAR	
23 MAR-26 MAR	
26 MAR	CHANGE OF COMMAND, LCDR W.J. ROBERTSON RELIEVED BY
	LCDR D.E. DAVIS
07 APR-09 APR	U/W INDEPENDENT SHIPHANDLING EXERCISES (ISE)
10 APR	COMPLETED PLANNED MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY
13 APR-17 APR	AVIATION CERTIFICATION/ARE
20 APR-24 APR	DIVE OPERATIONAL READINESS ASSESSMENT (DORA)
21 APR	NATO SECRET CONTROL POINT INSPECTION
22 APR-23 APR	
27 APR-01 MAY	
04 MAY	NAVIGATION CERTIFICATION
04 MAY-08 MAY	RECOVERY OF MARINE CORPS AAVP-7, MOOREHEAD
	CITY, NC
11 MAY-15 MAY	COMMAND ASSESSMENT OF READINESS AND TRAINING
	(CART) II
01 JUN-04 JUN	
01 000-04 000	AVAILABILITY (TSTA) I (ETG/FTG/CSTG)
05 JUN-08 JUN	TOW OF EX-USS COMTE DE GRASSE (DD 974) FROM
	NORFOLK, VA TO PHILADELPHIA, PA
22 JUN-26 JUN	LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT (LMA) ASSIST VISIT
29 JUN-30 JUN	COMMAND INSPECTION
06 JUL-07 JUL	OHSAT
06 JUL-10 JUL	U/W FOR TSTA II (ETG)
13 JUL-17 JUL	U/W FOR TSTA II (ETG)
20 JUL-24 JUL	U/W LOCAL OPERATING AREA
27 JUL-31 JUL	COMBAT SYSTEMS READINESS REVIEW (CSRR)/TARGET
03 AUG-07 AUG	CSRR/TARGET
11 AUG-16 AUG	TOW OF SAM RAYBURN (MTS 635) FROM NORFOLK, VA TO
	CHARLESTON, SC
25 AUG-01 SEP	DIVERTED TO NORFOLK NAVAL SHIPYARDS FOR HURRICANE
	BONNIE STORM EVASION
01 SEP	U/W ENROUTE PHILADELPHIA, PA WITH
	ORDERS TO TOW USS FORRESTAL TO NEWPORT, RI
02 SEP-06 SEP	INPORT PHILADELPHIA, PA
08 SEP	U/W ENROUTE HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA IN SUPPORT OF.
	RECOVERY EFFORTS OF SWISSAIR FLT 111
14 SEP-30 SEP	ONSTATION PEGGY'S COVE, NOVA SCOTIA IN SUPPORT OF
	RECOVERY EFFORTS OF SWISSAIR FLT 111
01 OCT-06 OCT	INPORT HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA
06 OCT-09 OCT	U/W ENROUTE LITTLE CREEK, VA
19 OCT-06 NOV	INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE AVAILABILITY (IMAV)
09 NOV-13 NOV	ISE (UNREP WITH USS MONONGAHELA (AO 178))
16 NOV-19 NOV	LMA (S1, S3) AND LMA ASSIST (S2, 3M)
30 NOV-02 DEC	LMA (S2)
04 DEC-04 JAN	PRE-DEPLOYMENT STANDOWN PERIOD
07 JAN	DEPLOY MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Encl (2) ·

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## NARRATIVE

GRAPPLE experienced a year of overwhelming success during 1998. During the first and well into the second quarters, GRAPPLE prepared for and successfully completed the majority of her interdeployment training cycle including several required inspections.

In May, GRAPPLE began a busy spring/summer schedule by recovering a Marine Corps AAVP-7 that sank during exercises off Moorehead City, NC. Submerged in 60 feet of seawater, GRAPPLE safely executed the recovery of the 30 ton armored vehicle without incident.

During the first week of June, GRAPPLE completed the successful tow of the Ex-USS COMTE DE GRASSE (DD 974) from Norfolk, VA to Philadelphia, PA. In August, GRAPPLE completed the first ARS-50 Class salvage ship tow of SAM RAYBURN (MTS 635), under escort by USS ROBERT G. BRADLEY (FFG 49), from Norfolk, VA to Charleston, SC. The SAM RAYBURN is a Moored Training Ship with a fully functional nuclear reactor under the control of the Commanding Officer, Nuclear Power Training Unit, Charleston. In both instances, GRAPPLE's crew accomplished the extremely hazardous task of connecting the several tons of wire rope, chain and hardware required to affect the tow with the ultimate degree of safety.

On 2 September, Swissair Flight 111 crashed off the coast of Nova Scotia, Canada near Peggy's Cove. The Canadian Government, military, Coast Guard and civilian organizations commenced immediate salvage and recovery operations. The main debris field was discovered at a depth of approximately 180 feet in a circular footprint with a radius of roughly 200 yards. On 6 September, GRAPPLE, under the order of Commander, Second Fleet, and at the request of the Canadian Government, transited to the crash site to assist in the recovery effort.

Recovery operations concluded on 30 September due to the closing weather window of opportunity. Consequently, the Canadian Government chose to expedite the recovery effort via commercial means. A total of 49 mixed gas dives were accomplished off GRAPPLE, recovering an estimated five percent of the McDonnell Douglas MD-11 aircraft and nearly all of the victims of the crash. GRAPPLE sailors acted effectively as a team, transitioning safely through numerous hazardous evolutions ranging from mixed gas diving operations to multi-point mooring evolutions.

During the month of October, GRAPPLE completed a three-week intermediate maintenance availability in preparation for her upcoming deployment to the Mediterranean Sea. On 9 November, GRAPPLE began a strenuous week of independent shiphandling exercises including simulated helicopter operations, a gunshoot exercising the 50-caliber and 25-mm machine guns, and culminating in an UNREP with USS MONONGAHELA (AO 178), the first in three years.

GRAPPLE rounded out the year with a well-deserved pre-deployment standdown in preparation for a pending Mediterranean deployment.

Encl (3)